DEMOCRATIC

GERMAN REPORT

VOL. I NO. 9 MAY 9th 1952 Price: 15 Pf., 5 c., 3 d

W. Germany Moves To Seal Border But Peace Treaty Call Grows

The West German authorities have begun to take extraordinary measures to seal the artificial zonal frontier which runs through the heart of Germany, according to reports reaching Berlin.

An area some seven miles deep on the western side of the demarcation line has been declared a closed area, and the greatly reinforced and heavily armed mobile police quads operating here have been authorised to arrest and search without warrant and to use their firearms without warning.

Directly along the border line itself barbed wire entanglements and trenches form part of the new measures.

"The demarcation line has thus been de facto converted into a state frontier, and these provocative measures are designed to help Adenauer in his plans for civil war" commented "Neues Deutschland", official paper of the Socialist Unity Party.

Meanwhile the demand for all-German elections and a peace treaty instead of the separate "contractual agreement" between West Germany and the western powers was rising in all parts of Germany.

On May First the biggest demonstrations for many years were held in both halves of the country, with the demand for a peace treaty predominating in both east and west.

In Munich, American zone, 80,000 workers demonstrated under banners proclaiming "1933: Seven Million Jobless — 1945: Ten Million Dead. We Demand a Peace Treaty."

There were similar great united turn-outs in Hamburg, Dusseldorf and other cities throughout West Germany.

In East Berlin nearly one million people jammed the streets to march to the Marx-Engels-Platz, formerly site of the Kaiser's Palace.

In his May Day address delivered there East German President Wilhelm Pieck stated:

"At this time, which is so vital for the very existence of our homeland, the Social Democrats, Communists and Trade Unionists must link hands and organize mass strikes against Adenauer and his war treaty.

"If the West German people are not able to stop the conclusion of the general war treaty and the conscription of their sons in an army of mercenaries, then it will become necessary for us in the German Democratic Republic to organize the armed defence of our homeland."

U. S. KIDNAPPERS

Newspapers in the western world often carry sensational stories of "Red Kidnappings" in West Berlin. GERMAN REPORT has investigated many of these stories, and in every case it turned out that they were either complete inventions, or were garbled reports of quite normal and legal arrests made by East Berlin police or detectives near the sector boundary which runs through the city.

In this issue GERMAN REPORT is able to give full authentic details of a real kidnapping, which was, however, not reported in the British and American press. Here the kidnapers were agents of the U.S. military authorities, operating with forged papers, bottles of ether and weapons, many miles inside the East Sector.

SEE PAGE FIVE

SOVIETS GIVE E. GERMANY 66 PLANTS

The government of the Soviet Union has handed over 66 important factories in East Germany, hitherto run as Soviet state concerns, to the government of the German Democratic Republic.

These factories, which were taken over by the Soviet Union from their former nazi owners in 1945, now become nationally owned enterprises.

The works handed over include seven lignite coal workings; seven phosphate mines; the "Neptun" dockyard on the Baltic; the BMW car factory, which turns out many hundreds of cars monthly; three bicycle factories; the great Wolfen dyestuffs factory; two steel works; the huge synthetic petrol plant at Bochlen; and dozens of others including such vital factories as those producing ballbearings and electrical measuring instruments.

In the past few years the Soviet state concerns in East Germany, usually known as S.A.G.s from the abbreviated German title, have served as a pattern from any other works. The S.A.G. concerns were headed by Soviet directors and technicians with experience of working in a planned economy, and they were able to give many valuable tips to Germans who were just beginning to learn how to plan.

In the first years after the war the S.A.G.s worked mainly on reparations, helping to provide the Soviet Union with the goods necessary to make good the appalling devastation left by Hitler's armies in Russia. With the progressive reduction in reparations, which now amount to only two percent of East German production, the S.A.G.s have been integrated in the production plans of the German Democratic Republic.

The official announcement of the hand-over issued by the government of the German Democratic Republic stated:

"This step is an expression of the confidence shown by the Soviet people in the strength of peace and democracy among our people. The Soviet government by this step has underlined its policy of recognising the sovereignty of the German people."

Why armed forces for a democratic Germany?

by Walter Ulbricht

(The proposals made by the Soviet Union for a peace treaty with Germany include the suggestion that a united Germany should have national defensive armed forces. In an important speech delivered in Berlin on May 3rd Walter Ulbricht, Deputy Prime Minister and General Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party, dealt at length with this point. Here are the most important points from his speech.)

All states with which peace treaties were concluded after the Second World War were granted the right to establish national armed forces.

In view of the existence of agressive imperialist forces in the world a peace-loving Germany must be able to protect itself.

The citizens of a peace-loving democratic Germany are much more likely to be able to live in peace if the aggressive powers know that this Germany is protected by national forces, and firmly linked with the world peace camp.

Military forces and 'militarism' are not the same thing. Those forces may by described as militaristic which are organised to serve the arms kings, the bankers and the great landowners, and in order to suppress their own people and to carry out acts of aggression against other peoples.

The special feature of militarism in West Germany is that it intends to subject the working people of West Germany to the yoke of the American and British occupation forces.

West German militarism is the mortal enemy of the national interests of the German people, since it serves the ruling circles in the United States which wish to convert West Germany into a deployment ground for war, and which wish to use West German mercenaries as cannon fodder.

The decisive question is the nature of the state; the question whether the people have the decisive word, or, as in West Germany the arms kings and Hitler's economic experts.

Another very important question is who should lead such armed forces. In West Germany the army leaders are the old militarists, but in a future united democratic Germany the officers of the national army for the defence of the homeland will be the best sons of the working people.

It is also of great importance with whom the state is allied, whether with the great world peace camp or with the states of the Atlantic War Pact.

Some workers in the German Democratic Republic state complacently that they need not worry about protecting their homeland, since the Soviet army is there to look after that. The heroic Soviet army made enormous sacrifices in the fight to liberate Germany from Hitler fascism. That only increases the responsibility of the working class and the whole working population that they should themselves defend the achievements of our young republic. It is a great patriotic task, this task of protecting the great work of construction in our homeland with weapons in our hands.

Some workers say that they are naturally ready to protect the nationally-owned factories, to make sure that they never fall again into the hands of the capitalist exploiters. Many peasants say that they would be ready to protect their fields so that they are never taken over again by the big landowners.

But neither a factory guard nor a village guard is sufficient protection against the militarists in West Germany. The task of defending the homeland must be gone about with all seriousness and with scientific precision.

If Adenauer, against the will of the majority of the population in West Germany, signs the General Treaty (Contractual Agreement, ed.), then the armed protection of the German Democratic Republic will be necessary for the preservation of peace. The American occupiers must be shown that their policy of military threats is doomed to failure.

Church Bells give Alarm

The church bells of the village of Sembach near Kaiserslautern in the American Zone gave the alarm on April 22nd when surveyors arrived to measure out fields earmarked for a new military airfield.

The peasants of the village, supported by men from neighbouring villages rallied and first of all remonstrated with the German surveyors employed on the job. When this was unsuccessful they drove them from the fields by force.

Two days later the provincial government of Rheinland-Pfalz announced that the requisition order on the land had been withdrawn.

The town authorities of Freudenstadt in the American Zone have ordered that no firm which had been employed by the US-Military in building demolition chambers in West German bridges should be allowed to tender for the job of building a new hospital in the town. "No public contracts will be given to firms which take on demolition chamber building" the official announcement said.

Bonn Politician Was War Criminal

The chairman of the Foreign Policy Committee of the West German Free Democratic Party, Dr Ernst Achenbach, was responsible during the war for the deportation of at least 2000 Jews from France to nazi concentration camps, the West German newspaper "Echo der Woche" reported.

The newspaper reproduced a document from the files of Ribbentrop's Foreign Office showing that Achenbach had been head of the political department of the nazi embassy in Vichy when he committed the crime. The Free Democratic Party is one of the partners in the West German government, and Dr Achenbach had often been named as candidate for the post of Foreign Minister.

Pastor Niemoeller Renews Peace Call

If the world wants peace, then it must be willing to live in peace with Russia, the famous west German clergyman Dr Martin Niemoeller stated in an interview.

"It is quite ridiculous to demand that the whole world should be governed in one manner, either according to capitalist or Communist principles" Dr Niemoeller stated.

"I myself am neither capitalist nor Communist, neither an easterner nor a westerner. I live in the so-called west of Germany, but the 'East' is Germany's neighbour, and if we wish to live in peace then we must live in peace with all our neigbours.

"The people who say 'No peace with Communists' really mean no peace at all. The truth of the matter is that we can have no real peace movement if the Communists are excluded from it."

Big peace demonstrations in West Berlin

West Berlin brutally batonned peace demonstrations in West Berlin on April 24th, on May 1st and again on May 2nd, making many hundreds of arrests.

All the demonstrations, which were completely peaceful in character, and which were simply asking for a peace treaty, were represented in the western press as aggressive attacks on West Berlin. The New York Times for instance carried the headline "25,000 Reds Storm West Berlin."

In fact the demonstrations formed up well inside the French sector of the city, and were prevented by club-swinging West Berlin riot squads from marching to the sector border to attend a meeting there.

An interesting side-light on the rather light-hearted attitude towards facts displayed by many western correspondents was given by the American United Press reporter, who wrote "The main trouble spot was Vineta Platz in the French sector, some twenty miles from central Berlin."

Vineta Platz is some three miles from the centre of Berlin, but is about 20 miles from the United Press office.

On May 1st there was a renewal of West Berlin police brutality when they attacked without warning groups of West Berlins workers trying to cross the sector frontier to attend the huge May Day rally in East Berlin.

Third attack in the week came on May 2nd, when students from the Humboldt University in the Democratic Sector of Berlin tried to distribute peace leaflets to participants in the conference of West German students being held in West Berlin.

The conference organisers had specifically appealed to East Berlin students to attend the meeting, but West Berlin police made a sudden raid, arresting over 200 young men and women. As GERMAN REPORT went to press 124 of the students were crammed together in mass cells in West Berlin prisons, awaiting trial on charges of "rioting".

French Plane infringes Berlin Air Corridor

Soviet planes were forced to fire a warning volley when a French commercial airliner refused to land after being intercepted outside the legal air-lane to Berlin, the Soviet authorities in East Germany stated on April 29th in a protest to the French occupation authorities.

The Soviet protest, which was signed by Major General Trussov, Deputy Chief of Staff of the Soviet forces in Germany, stated that the incident occurred at 10.30 a. m. on April 29th when the French plane was sighted over Merseburg, some 15 miles outside the air-corridors to Berlin which were fixed in 1945 by four power agreement.

Soviet fighters signalled to the French plane to land, and when their signal was ignored fired a warning volley. The French machine then vanished in a cloud, the Soviet protest stated.

The incident was exploited by the western press as an opportunity for a spate of scare stories, obviously designed to whip up war fever.

Nazi propagandist new press chief

The new press chief of the West German government, Felix von Eckhardt, was author of a number of war propaganda films made for the nazis in the early 1940's.

The West German Confessional Church Magazine "Stimme der Gemeinde", protesting against this appointment, commented: "Dr Adenauer has called him to office so that he can play the same old war tunes."

"DEUTSCHLAND UEBER ALLES" West German Anthem - Official

"Deutschland über Alles", old German anthem which Hitler's armies sang across Europe, was officially proclaimed West Germany's National Anthem on May 5th.

The announcement was made by West German President Theodor Heuss, who as a member of the Reichstag in 1933 voted for full powers for Hitler.

The President's Chancellery announced that all three verses of the song would be sung, including the aggressive verse which calls for a Germany which stretchs in the east as far as the river Memel (in the Soviet Union and over 300 miles east of the present German frontier) and in the south to the river Adige in Italy, nearly one hundred miles from the nearest point in Germany.

Observers in Berlin pointed out that the, reintroduction of the song as official national anthem was one further step in the chauvinistic campaign in West Germany for a military adventure against the east.

Only two years ago, when Chancellor Adenauer led the singing of the relatively harmless third verse of the song at a West Berlin meeting, the British, French and United States Commandants who were present remained seated as sign of protest, and the British commandant speaking off the record, described the action to correspondents as "a boorish insult".

Following this month's West German announcement a spokesman of the Western Allied High Commission simply stated "It is up to the Germans to decide what they want to sing."

The German Democratic Republic has a completely new national anthem, neither the words nor the music of which are in any way associated with German militarist tradition. The words were written by noted poet Johannes R. Becher, and the music by famous composer Hanns Eisler.

The anthem, which became immediately popular, calls on the German people to "learn and create as never before", so that the sun of peace may shine, and that so that "never again must a mother mourn for her fallen son".

East German Production up Again

Production in the German Democratic Republic was up twenty percent in the first quarter of 1952 compared to the same period last year, the State Planning Commission announced.

The plan for the quarter was overfulfilled by one and a half percent, the report stated, but in several important branches, including anthracite, vehicles and certain classes of machinery the plan figures were not reached. The report strongly criticised the ministries concerned for the insufficent support given in overcoming difficulties, and for supplying detailed plans behind schedule.

Lagging production in some branches was more than counterbalanced, however by great increases in other branches, particularly electric power, lignite, electric motors and synthetic petrol.

Productivity per man-hour increased 16 percent compared to the first quarter of 1951, and export and import figures were 76 percent higher.

A sign of the increasing prosperity of small retail traders was that their sales were 12 percent higher than had been originally planned.

PROFILE

HANS GARBE — MAN IN THE FIERY FURNACE

What sort of people are the "Activists", these top-grade workers in the German Democratic Republic, and in other countries where the factories belong to the people?

One of Berlin's most colourful Activists is Hans Garbe, a fifty-year old bricklayer. Today he earns good wages, and eats better than ever before in his life, but his deep-set eyes and almost gaunt face betray the fact that for most of his life he was on very short rations.

Junker Estate

Hans Garbe was born just after the turn of the century on a Junker estate in Prussia, where the feudal law of the "rich man in his castle, the poor man at his gate" was still very much in force. From the age of eight onwards Hans was more often working in the fields than studying at school.

When he was fourteen he fled from the estate and found work in a nearby town as builder's labourer. By the time he was eighteen he had learned the trade, and become active in the builder's trade union.

From the end of the First World War until the end of the Second World War in 1945, Garbe's biography reads very much like that of any other German worker, except that he studied more, read more, thought more than most of his colleagues. He experienced periods of work, spells of unemployment, the sack for trade-union organising work.

Driving Force

With the end of the war the whole suppressed energy of the twelve years of the Hitler dictatorship burst out. The stocky, quiet bricklayer, instead of surrendering to the general depression and despair like so many of his mates, was filled with a driving force of enormous power. He was one of the first to start to rebuild the old trade unions, wrecked by Hitler. He was back at work again as one of the first helping to clear the ruins and to build a new, better Germany in which people like him would have the say.

In the first period the job was not easy. Workers too had been deeply infected by the poison of the nazi regime, and when Garbe tried to expose the smuggling operations of the private owner of the East Berlin factory in which he worked, smuggling operations which were extremely detrimental to everyone, his mates turned on him and made it impossible for him to work there any longer.

He then found work in the great Siemens-Plania plant, formerly part of the German Electrical Trust, but now a nationally owned factory. His work consisted of repairing and renewing the fire-brick in the furnaces used in the manufacture of electrodes, carbon-rods, and other electrical equipment.

Factory work in 1947 and 1948 in East Germany was no pleasure. Food rations were still catastrophically low, the planning of industry was only in its infancy, public transport was hopelessly overcrowded, there had been practically no clothes or shoes in the shops for years. On every side Garbe heard the same argument: "If they would give us more to eat, then we could do more work."

Vicious Spiral

But Garbe had not worked and studied and struggled for all these years in vain. He knew that the only way to break through the vicious spiral was to produce more, providing the goods which could be exchanged, both at home and abroad, for food.

He sat down and studied very carefully the work which he had to do. By careful preparation and division of labour he found that it was possible to reline a furnace in thirteen working hours, instead of the fifty-two hours previously needed.

But instead of praise and congratulations he found that he was greeted on all sides with dislike and contempt.

At a meeting of the trade union branch one of his mates, hungry and shabby as they all were in those days, took off his shoe, waved it in the air with his finger sticking through the sole and shouted: "When I get some shoes, then I can do some decent work."

Hans Garbe had never been a good speaker, and he was almost too excited to speak, but he got up, and, clutching the back of a chair until his knuckles showed white he said:

"You, most of you, call me a traitor because I have been doing the work four times as quickly as before. Why don't you try it? Would you curse the workers in the shoe factory down the street if they started turning out 10,000 pairs of shoes daily instead of only 2500 as they do now?"

Then came Garbe's greatest test. Parts of the factory had been destroyed as a result of the war, and the one remaining ring-furnace had been working overtime. Now the time had come for a general overhaul. Electrode production would have to cease completely for at least four months, said the technical experts. The whole of the Two Year Plan, which started at the beginning of 1949, was endangered, since the products from the Siemens factory were urgently needed on all sides.

Garbe felt instinctively that there must be some way to avoid this. Bitterly he regretted the lack of sufficient schooling, which made it almost impossible for him to answer the arguments of the experts.

Experts Dissent

His plan was simple: instead of extinguishing the furnace altogether it should be overhauled section by section, while the other portions went on working, turning out the sorely needed parts for industry.

The experts shook their heads. Impossible.

Garbe selected his mates for the job with care. They had to be men filled with the same sort of enthusiasm which filled him, men ready to climb down into the chambers of the furnace and work at temperatures ranging up to 160 degrees Fahrenheit.

When they started, even the seven men of this special brigade scarcely thought that they could succeed. But they were willing to have a try, because they knew that their work meant more butter on every slice of bread in East Germany in the near future, and ultimately meant a united Germany in a peaceful Europe.

Hero of Labour

But they did succeed, and on October 13th 1950, Hans Garbe was one of the select handful of outstanding workers decorated with the title "Hero of Labour".

He is proud of the title, but he is even prouder of something else: the fact that in every factory throughout the German Democratic Republic there are today dozens of Activists and outstanding workers, who as a result of the pioneer labours of Garbe and dozens of others like him came to understand that they were now working for themselves, for the ordinary people, for the future, and not to fatten the bank balances of a handful of bosses.

U. S. AGENTS MAKE SNATCH IN E. BERLIN

Kidnapping with Forged Documents, Ether, Handcuffs

By the GERMAN REPORT Crime Expert.

American Army agents using forged Soviet papers carried out a kidnapping deep in the East Sector of Berlin on March 28th 1952 contrary to all civil and international law, according to full details brought to light by a special investigation.

The agents, two Germans and a Polish professional criminal, were acting on the direct orders of officials of the U. S. Army 11. Criminal Investigation Department, investigation revealed.

Pennsylvania Victim

The man kidnapped was an American, 22 years old Robert Natskakula, from Pennsylvania. In spring 1950 Natskakula, who was serving at that time in the American army in West Berlin, came to realise that he was being made to play the role of a conquerer, not a democratiser. During visits to East Berlin he saw what was being done there to build a better Germany.

He asked the government of East Germany for a chance to work and live here; this was granted him, and Natskakula settled down to a steady job in East Berlin, in the suburb of Koepenick.

He carefully avoided the West Sectors of Berlin, where he knew that he stood in danger of instant arrest by the American authorities and their German police agents.

Mata Hari Fails

The fact that young Natskakula was living contentedly in East Berlin, doing a decent man's job gave the U. S. Army C. I. D. no rest, and with the help of the network of spies and saboteurs which they have built up underground in East Germany they found out exactly where Natskakula was working and living. Several times they attempted to lure him into the West Sectors, using the time-worn services of blonde "Mata Haris", but Natskakula, who was happily married in East Berlin, showed no inclination to fall.

Finally, early in March this year, three C. I. D. officials named Stockham, Trimble and Russell took the decision to organise a kidnapping. They did not wish to use any of their regular agents for the job, preferring to pick up a slap-happy young tough named Lagejus in the "Badewanne", West Berlin's "Hot" dance spot, which numbers goons, FBI men, dope-fiends and prostitutes among its regular guests.

The American officers suggested to Lagejus, who was formerly private secretary to a Catholic chaplain, that he should simply drive to Natskakula's apartment in the East Sector, black-jack his unsuspecting victim with a brick wrapped in a sock, and cart him off to the West Sector where "the forces of law and order" would be waiting for him. To help him in his heroic deed they handed him a pair of official U. S. handcuffs.

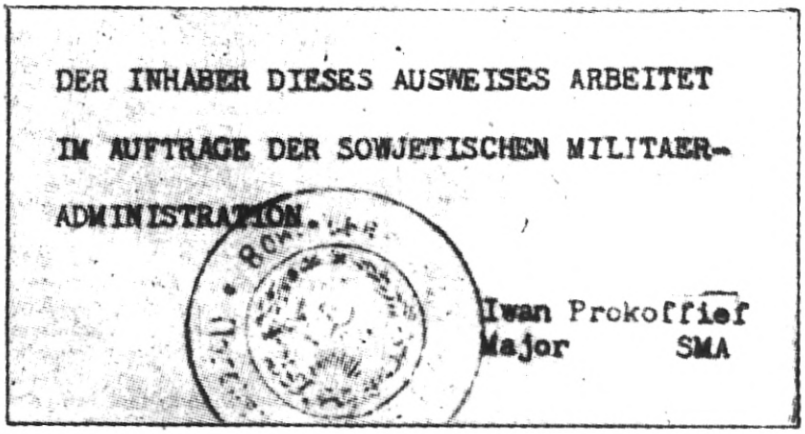
Lagejus recruited two assistants, a student named Fred Kleiner and a Pole named Racek, who claimed that he had killed three Polish military police and a number of other persons.

Ether Bottles

On March 28th, armed with a stolen revolver, two bottles of ether, and the primitively forged "Soviet Pass" pictured on this page, the three kidnappers set out in a hired Ford. Leaving the car with the engine running, the two Germans mounted the stairs to Natskakula's apartment. They presented the forged documents, and Natskakula, remarking to his wife that the business was probably something to do with passport formalities, walked unsuspectingly down the stairs and into the car.

As soon as the car was across the sector border Lagejus clamped the U. S. handcuffs on Natskakula's wrists and said, with a drawl copied from dozens of G-men films which he had seen "You are under arrest, son". A few minutes later he handed the kidnapped man over to C. I. D. agent Trimble.

Postscript: On April 17th 1952 an American military court in Berlin sentenced Robert Natskakula to eighteen months imprisonment. The indictment stated simply that he had been arrested in the American Sector of Berlin, but failed to mention that he had been kidnapped to get him there.



"The holder of this document is working for the Soviet Military Administration" states the forged pass (shown above) which was used in the kidnapping described on this page. Obvious proofs of this clumsy forgery are: 1) the fact that the round rubber stamp is an old postal stamp; 2) the "Soviet Military Administration" and its abbreviated form SMA ceased to exist in October 1949, when it was replaced by the present Soviet Control Commission; 3) the Russian name of the alleged signatory would be transliterated into German as "Prokofiew" and under no circumstances as given on the forged pass.

FASCIST THUGS MURDER UNIONIST

Facists thugs, incited by American-sponsored broadcasts from West Berlin, beat a 56 year old trade unionist to death on the eve of May First in Obergebra, near Nordhausen, in the German Democratic Republic.

The brutal murder took place in the course of a factory meeting, which was constantly interrupted by the two thugs, named Wilhelm and Muras, who started to sing nazi songs.

Alfred Sobik, father of six children, a life-long unionist and member of the Communist party since 1926, tried to restore order, but was set upon and beaten to death before his mates could save him. The two men were immediately handed over to the People's Police.

Letter to a British Taxpayer

Dear Bill,

Every year several million pounds of your money are used to subsidize the foreign language programmes of the British Broadcasting Station.

"Jolly good idea" you may say. But do you know what sort of programmes the B.B.C. puts out in your name, under the camouflage of its fine slogan "Nation shall speak peace unto nation"?

To give you some idea of the way your money is being spent, I should like to quote a few lines from a broadcast in German transmitted from London on April 24th at 1930 GMT. The programme was addressed to East Germany:

"I want to talk about the visit paid by Polish building workers to Berlin, about that 'unforgettable moment in the fraternisation between the workers of Berlin and the builders of the new Warsaw' as the east zonal press reports.

"I should like to know how German workers feel when they have to put up with such things. I can easily imagine their quiet scorn, their disgust, the way they grind their teeth. Has it really come to such a pass that German bricklayers have to allow Polish building workers to show them how to build?

"This is all just a part of this propagandistic frothing at the mouth, which provides no single inhabitant of the East Zone with a new house."

The last sentence is just silly, as is shown by the report in this number of GERMAN REPORT on the tenants moving into East Berlin's fine new nine-storey flats.

But that is not the point. If you had heard the tone of condescending disdain with which the voice from London referred to "Polish building workers", you would have realised that what was really meant was "bloody Polacks".

The B.B.C., to put it quite bluntly, was reviving once again Hitler's old arguments about the "inferior Slavs", about the "German supermen", who naturally would know everything much better than a bunch of ignorant Poles.

The B.B.C. was deliberately trying to fan the embers of the old racial theories, in preparation for a new war.

But I think that the bright young men of the Foreign Office who write the scripts for such transmissions have miscalculated very badly. The people of East Germany have every reason to be grateful to the peoples of Poland and the other countries of eastern Europe, who have given them so much help in building a new democratic state.

And the bricklayers and all the others working on the great programme of rebuilding in East Berlin know the astonishing job which the builders of Warsaw have done in raising their city from the ruins, and since they have only just started on the job in Berlin they are glad of all the help they can get.

The builders of Berlin know how to appreciate the fact that representatives of the Polish nation, which lost six million dead as a result of Hitler's war, were willing to come to Berlin to help rebuild, and to show their confidence that the bad old days of chauvinism and hatred are ended for ever.

If you feel as strongly about this disgusting attempt by the B.B.C. to whip up German chauvinism as I do, why not get in touch with your Member of Parliament and ask him to do something about it?

Yours sincerely,
John Peet.

P. S. And if you happen to be an American tax-payer, instead of a British tax-payer, you may be sure that the "Voice of America" regularly transmits similar incitements. J. P.

War Criminal freed

The British authorities in West German have released war criminal Paul Nieke, who was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment for murdering an allied pilot during the war.

Democratic
GERMAN REPORT

Subscription rates: 4 German marks, 8/—sterling, $ 1.25 per annum or pro rata, post free.

In Democratic Germany subs. taken at all post offices. Single copies may be purchased at the international newsstands.

British subs. to:
Collet's Subscription Dept.,
40 Great Russell St.,
London W. C. 1

U. S. subs. to:
National Guardian,
17 Murray St.,
New York 7.

All other communications to:
Democratic German Report,
Friedrichstrasse 167 III,
Berlin W 8,
Germany.

All material in this paper may be freely reprinted. Voucher copies of reprints appreciated.

FLASH . . .

A. P. TELLS TRUTH!

Sometimes by the law of averages one of the big western news agencies is almost bound to carry a true story about Berlin or East Germany. Here is one example which got past the editors and was printed in the York (Pennsylvania) Gazette and Daily:

"Berlin -(A.P.). The five-markers' are around town again. Like the groundhog, the five-markers crawl out of their holes from time to time, sniff the political winds from East and West and go to work.

"The five-markers are male and female, young and old, thin and fat, spruce and unshaven. They have only one thing in common — they all 'know something', and they are willing to peddle it for only five marks. Ever since crossroads Berlin became established as the only genuine peephole behind the Iron Curtain, the five-markers have been in business. From the deep recesses of their 'sources' they have over the years:

"1. Found a 'revolt' in the Red Army in East Germany.

"2. Discovered 'pitched battles' between Russians and Germans in the Soviet zone.

"3. Blown up half the uranium mines.

"4. 'learned' that Stalin is dead and a double sits-in for him, and also that he isn't dead but is dying.

"5. 'purged' Otto Grotewohl, East German Prime Minister, at least three times, and Communist Party boss Walter Ulbricht occasionally.

"It never abashes the five-marker that none of these things ever happen. By the time the 'tip' is dead, he's got new ones, anyway. The standard price is five marks."

ONE HUNDRED MILLION MARKS SAVING TO REBUILD BERLIN

Engineers and technicians of the Transformer and X-ray Machine Works, Dresden, have pledged themselves to save at least one million marks in the factory during 1952 through new inventions and improved working methods. The money saved will be donated to the fund for the reconstruction of Berlin.

The Dresden engineers have appealed to technical workers in other branches of industry to make similar savings so that the sum donated should reach a total of at least one hundred million marks (over thirty million dollars).

In 1951 workers in the Dresden Transformer Works made a total of 2265 suggestions for improvements in the factory working methods, and filed a total of 143 patents.

The Activist Moves In

One of the people who moved into the nine-storey block of flats on Berlin's Weberwiese on May 1st was Activist Rudolf Trompa, a fitter, with his wife and his twelve year old daughter.

Until now Trompa has been living in a little leaky one-and-a-half room attic flat in an old slum made still more rickety by near-hits from bombs during the war.

In 1948 Rudolf Trompa, who had been conscripted into the army and captured on the western front, returned from a prisoner of war camp in France, and immediately set about rebuilding not only his own life but the life of the whole of Berlin as well.

There was plenty of work in East Berlin, and by 1950, by his hard work and initiative as a fitter he had won the title of Activist, awarded only to those workers who have given outstanding service towards making life better for all.

Bigger Pay Packet

His work as an Activist had meant a bigger pay packet as well as a title, and the series of price reductions in the German Democratic Republic in the past few years have made it possible for him to get quite a respectable home together again. Instead of the old packing-case bed the Trompas now have a modern extending double couch; instead of the single nail on the wall from which they could hang all their worldly possessions a few years ago they now have cupboards and wardrobes; and a fine new radio gives them entertainment.

All this new furniture was fine, but the attic flat was not a place to enjoy life. That is why Rudolf Trompa and his wife were both active voluntary workers on the rubble-clearing project through East Berlin to clear the way for new apartments.

One day early in April Trompa was suddenly called to the telephone in his factory. "This is the Union secretary", said a voice "How would you like to move into the new nine-storey house?"

A few days later Rudolf Trompa and his wife Dorothea went to look at their new flat. Stumbling over planks and heaps of tiles, for the work on the big new building was still not quite completed, they entered the hall through the shining black marble entrance. The ground floor has no flats, and is reserved solely for lock-up storage rooms for bicycles and baby-carringes.

The Trompas do not need to use the roomy lift since their apartment is on the first floor. Frau Trompa gasps as she goes in — she had never imagined anything as fine as the three room flat she sees, though it is still full of the litter which builders everywhere leave behind them, and smells overpoweringly of paint. She wants to look at everything at once — the electric stove, the electric hot-water heater, the built-in kitchen cupboards.

Like all the other rooms in the flat the kitchen will be warmed by the central heating system, the big friendly windows will make work a pleasure, and the rubbish-chute just outside the door will do away with the messy heavy work of carting buckets of refuse up and down stairs.

Meanwhile Rudolf Trompa has been measuring out the size of the other rooms, planning where to put the furniture which they already have, and seeing what they still have to buy.

"We have got to build houses like this in the whole of Germany for the workers," he said. "For the moment we are the lucky ones, and there are only a few thousand other Berliners who will be lucky enough to get a fine new flat like this this year. But just wait until we really get down to the job next year, with properly pre-fabricated parts and highly-mechanised building methods.

"In the meantime the lucky ones like us will go on doing our best both at work and in the volunteer rubble-squads so that there are soon no more bomb-ruins and no more slums, either in Berlin or anywhere else."

WHO GETS THE NEW HOUSES?

There are 32 fine roomy apartments in the nine-storied house on the Weberwiese, first to be completed under the 1952 National Reconstruction Programme. Here is a complete list of the tenants who were moving into these flats in the first week of May.

Albert Quast, master-mechanic at Treptow Telecommunications Works, award winner for good work.
Otto Reimann, worker at Treptow Telecomunications Works, award winner.
Wilhelm Kapito, constructional worker at Bergmann-Borsig Engineering works, Activist.
Walter Voelker, engineering worker at Bergmann-Borsig, Activist.
Willi Potratz, builging worker, leader of work brigade.
Wilhelm Klemmer, concrete constructional worker, Activist.
Willi Potratz, building worker, leader of work brigade.
Karl Roßbach, turner, Activist.
Gerhard Schwertfeger, worker at Berlin Electric Bulb Factory, has completed 100 volunteer rubble-clearing shifts in 1952.
Franz Liedke, engineer at Berlin Electric Bulb Factory.
Frau Melitta Kampa, worker in Fortschritt Garment Factory, Activist.
Ernst Winkler, worker at Berlin Tool Factory, award winner for good work.
Frau Edith Rostock, worker at Berlin Tool Factory, Activist.
Dr. Karl Seifert, physician.
Willi Kroll, worker at Berlin Tool Factory, Activist.
Karl-Heinz Boehme, stress expert in building control.
Max Dally, foreman in constructional undertaking.
Alfred Kesten, technician at Koepenick Radio Factory.
Rudi Meier, builder's labourer.
Hermann Bratke, assistant foreman in plumbing installation, award winner for good work
Walter Tille, works director of Youth Brigade of Berlin Constructional Engineers.
Gerhard Dalchau, architect.
Eduard Richter, worker at Berlin Machine-Tool Factory.
Reinhold Paetsch, cabinet maker at Berlin Machine-Tool Factory.
Karl Johannes, teacher.
Rudolf Trompa, fitter, Activist.
Eduard Naujoks, engineer, Activist.
Werner Dluczinski, People's Policeman.
Wilhelm Grassnick, engineer, Activist.
Fritz Heimann, building worker, leader of work brigade.
Erwin Scheminowski, tin-sheet worker at Koepenick Radio Factory, Activist.
Frau Roeckert, seamstress in Fortschritt Garment Factory.

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

The notebook this week should really be called "Holiday Notebook", for I am writing it not from Berlin but from the little village of Oberhof, 3000 feet up in the mountains of Thuringia.

During the winter Oberhof is the centre of the winter sports life of the German Democratic Republic, but now the snow is almost all gone, and most of the guests are not bronzed young skiers but older people enjoying a quiet week or two watching spring come to the mountains.

Exciting Guests

The exciting thing is that most of my fellow guests here are not the sort of people that one is used to seeing at an exclusive mountain resort. Future numbers of GERMAN REPORT will give many details of the way in which workers and children are being given pride of place in all schemes for holidays and recreation, and I should like to confine myself to the odd personal observations which I have made.

First of all, all of the big hotels in Oberhof have been taken over by trade unions, and are run exclusively for the workers in the trades concerned. Biggest hotel of all is crammed with hundreds of miners of all ages, with their wives and children. You can pick them out at a distance, for miners of all nations look very much alike, with their broad shoulders and blue-pitted skin.

Children at the moment are in a minority, for most parents with young children are planning a summer holiday by the sea, so most of the people I have met, sunning themselves in the spring sunshine, and wandering through the lovely woods round the village, are older people.

Best Blue Suits

Some of them even look a little uneasy in their best blue suits, as if they are not quite sure that it is right and proper for them to be sunning themselves, resting and living in a big hotel for the first time in their lives, but they soon settle down, take off their ties and their jackets, and set about learning to enjoy themselves.

This afternoon I was talking to one of the miners, a man of perhaps fifty, with a comfortable housewively wife. "I have been thirty years in the pits, and I could never afford a holiday before," he told me. "Before Hitler and even under Hitler we used to get a few days paid holidays, but there was nowhere we could afford to go.

"After 1945 we did not think of holidays for a bit, just living was difficult enough. Then things started going again, and as soon as we got some decent food we realized that things were different now that the pits belonged to us."

"We should have gone away on a holiday in 1949 for the first time, but something went wrong in the pit and my husband refused to go until everything was put right," said his wife. "Then in 1950 the coal production contest got under way, and he refused to go. All through 1951 I was at him to get him away, but he said that he had been digging coal for other people for so long that it was a positive pleasure to be digging it for himself and people like him. This is our 1951 holiday we are taking now, and we would not be away now if the union in my husband's pit had not ordered him to go. He would not listen to me, but he listened to them."

Blackmail?

"Don't heed her," said the old miner.. "They blackmailed me into this holiday by threatening to put me in an office job if I didn't go. But I am glad I came now. I am almost ready to believe that the union chairman was right when he said that I would be able to do a better job after the holiday than if I stayed and worked all through."

His was an extreme case, but now that the extreme urgency of the immediate post-war period is over, strict rules have had to be made to prevent people like him from wrecking their health by refusing to take their legal holidays.

The new-style guests not only have the finest hotels and grand walks at their dispotal. Every holiday centre has a good library, games rooms with table tennis and billiards, and even in a little town like Oberhof there is something on nearly every night. Yesterday evening a dramatic group from an engineering works at Erfurt put on a first-class variety programme; the theatre company from a nearby town pays a visit almost every week; there are popular scientific lectures every evening; and there is dancing almost every evening in six different hotels and cafes, with orchestras ranging from good to dreadful.

And the new atmosphere is not confined to the guests, naturally. I was sitting in the library the other afternoon when one of the maids in the hotel where I am staying appeared, and demanded the recently published "White Book on West German Remilitarisation."

On May First, International Labour Day, the whole of the little village was on the streets. Behind the very brassy and bucolic village band we all paraded to the sports ground for a May Day meeting.

There were girls in their colourful local costumes, farmers leading their prize goats and oxen, and the holiday guests who marched with the waiters, cooks and maids from the hotels where they were staying. And I would defy anyone to have been able to say with certainty "That is a guest, and that is a waiter."

Crazy High

Many outrageous suggestions come these days from the United States, but a new high was reached on April 23rd when General Frank Howley, former U. S. Commandant in Berlin, calmy proposed that the Soviet Union should return to Germany the reparations paid for war damage.

"The United States should not consent to the reunification of Germany until Germany returns the eight to ten billion dollars in reparations from current production taken from the Eastern Zone" the New York Times reported him as saying.

Bonus for Nazis?

In 1941 Hitler's armies invaded the Soviet Union. After devastating huge tracts of land and killing millions of Russians they were driven out. The German people who had either participated or at least acquiesced in Hitler's war of conquest were called upon to make good at least part of the damage done.

Now General Howley thinks that the German people should be paid a bonus for devastating the towns and countryside of the Soviet Union. Perhaps he will suggest next that the United States government should humbly apologise to the Mikado for having allowed Pearl Harbour to get in the way of those Japanese bombs; or he might even go so far as to advise the Jewish people to thank the nazis for having taken the trouble to erect extermination camps of millons of their brethren.

Edited and published fortnightly by John Peet, Democratic German Report, Friedrichstrasse 167/III Berlin W 8, Telephone: 42 62 69. Printed in Germany by (36). Veröffentlicht unter der Lizenz-Nr. 752 des Amtes für Information der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik.